

KING EDWARD VI SCHOOL

SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOL

History of the School House System

The School House System dates back to 1921. In this year the Rev. Cecil Knight (Headmaster 1914 - 1945) believed 'that a feeling of belonging to the school and to being associated with the multifarious activities could be enhanced, and a keener competitive spirit would be cultivated, with the creation of a system of Houses.'

At first there were six, reduced to four in 1924: Shakespeare, Flower (named after Charles Flower – responsible for the restoration of the School building in the 1890s), Warneford, and De La Warr (named after Earl Delawarr, High Steward of Stratford, who established the Delawarr Exhibition in 1853 for boys entering university). In 1973, the system was changed to two Houses – King's and Guild – in recognition of the benefactors of the School.

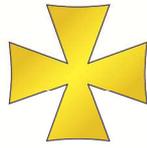
In 2000, with over four hundred and fifty boys in the school, having half the school competing against the other half was not positive for real competition, especially as House activities now comprised much more than simply athletics and games on the sports field. Timothy Moore-Bridger (Headmaster 1997 – 2010) decided to re-introduce four Houses, and following discussion with staff, decided that the four should be named (with colours) after people who had made a significant contribution to the School during the twentieth century: Richard Spender (purple), Denis Dyson (red), Rex Warneford (green) and Robert Fitzmaurice (light blue).

Although the name of one of the original Houses introduced by Cecil Knight, it was decided not to use Shakespeare, feeling the name would clearly overshadow the other three.

The Men Behind the Houses

Denis Dyson

Denis Dyson was born in 1904. He spent his childhood in London and Bristol, and in 1923 he won an exhibition to Jesus College Cambridge, graduating in 1926. In that year he joined the staff of K.E.S. This was to be the start of a remarkably long career at the school. He taught full time to the age of 71 and



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then continued to help with the work of the Science Department until he was in his nineties.

During his time at school almost no challenge was too great. Denis Dyson equipped and furnished his Physics laboratory almost single-handedly, and it became one of the best in the country. His other projects are too numerous to mention here, but Denis Dyson's contributions to the life of the school go well beyond them.

During six decades he formed unique relationships with pupils, and thousands of boys who passed through the School remember him with fondness and respect.

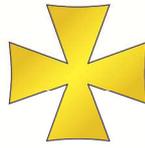
Denis Dyson set the highest standards for himself and those he taught. He was a remarkable example of endeavour and commitment to the school. Boys should feel proud to be associated with his name.

Robert Fitzmaurice

Robert Fitzmaurice was born in 1897 and was a boarder at King Edward VI School from 1909 to 1912. Following training as an Architect and Surveyor, he served with the Royal Engineers in France during the First World War, and was wounded and invalided out in 1918.

Gaining a B.Sc Honours degree in Civil Engineering at Birmingham University, he joined the Building Research Station, and became Assistant Scientific Advisor to the Home Office on the application of Science to a Building. Subsequently, he was Director of Research at the Ministry of Works, UK delegate to the EEC, a United Nations technical advisor to developing countries, the scientific adviser to the Ruler of Kuwait, and set up materials testing and agricultural research laboratories.

He wrote a number of books on the principles of Building, as well as novels. It was as a result of his generous bequest that the Fitzmaurice Building, appropriately housing the Design and Technology and Physics Departments, was able to be completed and opened in 1987.



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Richard Spender

Richard William Osbourne Spender, the youngest of four children, was born at Hereford on 27th June 1921. His family moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1924, after a brief period in London. He attended King Edward VI School from 1930 to 1940, where he was Captain of School.

Richard Spender, though his friends saw in him also an acutely sensitive and thoughtful spirit, left on all who met him an impression of intense happiness, a brimming-over of life, coupled with great vigour of body and mind. It was this delight in life which made him an exciting companion and an understanding friend to many people, widely different in age and circumstances.

These qualities endured even during the hardships and incessant fighting of the Tunisian Campaign during which he was killed in March 1943.

A companion wrote of him as 'loved by all' and 'his ever- cheerful face, which so much resembled the Laughing Cavalier, known throughout the Brigade'.

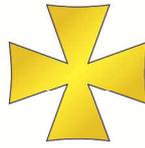
His poems express his zest for action, his delight in living, his passion for all country things, his love of England, save perhaps that many of his poems were written in time of war and are inevitably darkened by its shadow.

Richard Spender's poems can be found in the School Library and a selection, personally annotated, can also be found in the School Archive.

Rex Warneford

Reginald 'Rex' Warneford was born in India, and he was a Boarder at King Edward VI School between January 1903 and December 1905. Returning to India, he was apprenticed to the British India Steam Navigation Company. In 1914 he joined the Royal Naval Service and trained as a pilot, and was posted to St. Pol airfield, Dunkirk.

On the night of June 7 1915 he intercepted a Zeppelin. In his official report he described what happened: 'When close above the airship (at 7,000 feet altitude) I dropped my bombs, and, whilst releasing the last, there was an explosion which lifted my machine and turned it over. The aeroplane was out of control for a short period, but went into a nose dive, and the control was regained. I then saw that the Zeppelin was on the ground in flames. The joint on my



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petrol pipe and pump from the back tank was broken, and I was forced to land and repair my pump.'

On the same day that Warneford wrote his report, King George V – without precedent – sent him a telegram conferring on him the Victoria Cross. The following day, General Joffre recommended that Warneford be awarded the Knight's Cross of the Legion of Honour. He was sent to Paris, where the Minister of War pinned his own insignia on Rex's tunic, saying, 'I shall be proud to wear the one destined for you in its stead.'

Warneford was killed accidentally on June 17th 1915, only ten days after his exploit, while flying a Henry Farman F27 at Buc airfield near Paris. Eyewitness' reports suggest that the badly-made propeller broke in flight, wrenching off the tail of the machine. He was buried with full military honours in the Brompton Cemetery, London.